

Amendments to the Claims:

The following complete listing of claims replaces all previous versions and listings of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a seed sample to prevent germination of seeds in the sample and to render seeds in the seed sample safe for disposal comprising:

subjecting the seed sample to a combination of steam and microwaves operative to heat the seed sample to a treatment temperature effective to inactivate seeds in the seed sample to prevent germination and reproduction of the seeds; and

subjecting the seed sample to an effective ozone concentration operative to degrade herbicides and pesticides present in the seed sample and operative to inactivate pathogenic organisms present in the seed sample, wherein the seeds are subjected to microwaves and ozone simultaneously.

2. (Original) The method of Claim 1 wherein the treatment temperature is greater than 95° Celsius.

3. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the seed sample is maintained at the treatment temperature for at least 25 minutes.

4. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the effective ozone concentration is between 100 and 5000 parts ozone per million parts air (ppm).

5. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1 wherein the herbicide or pesticide is one of 2, 4D or thiamethoxam.

6. (Previously Presented) The method according to Claim 1, wherein the pathogens comprise at least one of viruses, bacteria, fungi, or protozoa.

7. (Canceled)

8. (Canceled)

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11. (Canceled)

12. (Canceled)

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27. (Canceled)

28. (Canceled)

29. (Canceled)

30. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the seed sample comprises genetically modified seeds.

31. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 1, and further comprising

composting the treated seeds.

32. (New) A method of treating a seed sample to prevent germination of seeds in the sample and to render seeds in the seed sample safe for disposal comprising:

subjecting the seed sample to a combination of steam and microwaves operative to heat the seed sample to a treatment temperature effective to inactivate seeds in the seed sample to prevent germination and reproduction of the seeds; and

subjecting the seed sample to an effective ozone concentration operative to degrade herbicides and pesticides present in the seed sample and operative to inactivate pathogenic organisms present in the seed sample, wherein the seeds are subjected to microwaves first and then subjected to ozone.

33. (New) The method of Claim 32, wherein the treatment temperature is greater than 95° Celsius.

34. (New) The method according to Claim 32, wherein the seed sample is maintained at the treatment temperature for at least 25 minutes.

35. (New) The method according to Claim 32, wherein the effective ozone

concentration is between 100 and 5000 parts ozone per million parts air (ppm).

36. (New) The method according to Claim 32, wherein the herbicide or pesticide is one of 2, 4D or thiamethoxam.

37. (New) The method according to Claim 32, wherein the pathogens comprise at least one of viruses, bacteria, fungi, or protozoa.

38. (New) The method of Claim 32 wherein the seed sample comprises genetically modified seeds.

39. (New) The method of Claim 32, and further comprising composting the treated seeds.

40. (New) A method of treating a seed sample to prevent germination of seeds in the sample and to render seeds in the seed sample safe for disposal comprising:

subjecting the seed sample to a combination of steam and microwaves operative to heat the seed sample to a treatment temperature effective to inactivate seeds in the seed sample to prevent germination and reproduction of the seeds;

subjecting the seed sample to an effective ozone concentration operative to degrade herbicides and pesticides present in the seed sample and operative to inactivate pathogenic organisms present in the seed sample;

and further passing the seeds through a shredder roller to break open the seeds before subjecting the seed sample to the combination of steam and microwaves.

41. (New) The method of Claim 40, wherein the treatment temperature is greater than 95° Celsius.

42. (New) The method according to Claim 40, wherein the seed sample is maintained at the treatment temperature for at least 25 minutes.

43. (New) The method according to Claim 40, wherein the effective ozone concentration is between 100 and 5000 parts ozone per million parts air (ppm).

44. (New) The method according to Claim 40, wherein the herbicide or pesticide is one of 2, 4D or thiamethoxam.

45. (New) The method according to Claim 40, wherein the pathogens comprise at least one of viruses, bacteria, fungi, or protozoa.

46. (New) The method of Claim 40, wherein the seed sample comprises genetically modified seeds.

47. (New) The method of Claim 40, and further comprising composting the treated seeds.